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## **Feds may pay for cleanup of Windham's Keddy Mill**

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Staff Writer

WINDHAM - The Keddy Mill property will likely enter a federal remediation program for the nation's most hazardous sites if its owner cannot come up with a plan to pay for a multimillion-dollar cleanup.

State Department of Environmental Protection officials have told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that they may apply next spring to put the Keddy Mill site into the Superfund program, said Jean Firth, DEP's Brownfields coordinator.

Firth and John Cressey, an environmental consultant for Windham, briefed town councilors at a meeting Tuesday on plans for clearing the Depot Street site of an estimated 55,000 tons of material contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

The DEP had asked the site's owner, HRC Village at Little Falls, to submit a plan by Sept. 30 for further assessment of the contamination. The owner asked to extend that deadline to Dec. 16.

Firth said DEP is allowing the owner to keep trying to come up with a plan as DEP moves toward applying for the federal program. "It's kind of on a dual track right now," she said.

Under the Superfund program, the EPA would seek parties responsible for the contamination to pay for the cleanup. If none can be found, federal funds would be used. In that case, the EPA would probably put a lien on the property and the owner would have to contribute to the cleanup cost.

Firth said the property owner is also seeking responsible parties. It would cost the owner less to clean the site on its own, she said.

The contamination was caused by metal fillings buried onsite that were contaminated with PCBs from oils used in metal turning machines, said Cressey, the town's consultant.

Keddy Mill used to make steel flanges and, before that, paper, Cressey said. It closed about 40 years ago.

HRC Village at Little Falls, which has owned the property for about 10 years, had planned to build condominiums there. The economy and mounting environmental



concerns stalled the plans. Meanwhile, contamination assessments continue.

"Every time the analysis goes a little deeper, the problem gets bigger," said Town Manager Tony Plante.

There are 14 Maine sites in the Superfund program, said Firth. She said the application process takes about a year.

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